

C. H. S.

BANDWAGON

APRIL, 1955

25c



— The Circusiana Magazine —

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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P. O. Box 235, Richmond, Indiana

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zine must be secured from both author
and publisher.

The Editor Says

Spring, Spring, and everything is get-
ting green, and Opening Day is all a-
round the Country. We wish all the
circuses, both large and small the big-
gest Season ever, and hope that they will
get to within a hundred miles of Rich-
mond, Indiana, so that I can see them.

We are always amazed at the ready
friendships that are made and that en-
dure from a mutual interest in the Cir-
cus. From the time that Bob and I first
attended a gathering of circus lovers way
back in the 40's we have counted among
our friends people from all around the
country. These people encompass all the
professions and trades, yet the same
gleam is in their eyes when the word
Circus is mentioned. It is always sur-
prising to me that more wives do not
share this enthusiasm with their hus-
bands. In this day of so many outside
interests to separate members of families,
I think that the Circus is one that each
member of the family can enjoy. When
wives do enjoy this fiery enthusiasm, they
are apt to be more avid even than the
male members of the family.

NEW MEMBERS

Dr. W. N. Delenk, No. 569
40 Ashford,
Hartford 5, Connecticut.

Donald Burton Nebergall,
No. 570
831 Kains Ave.,
San Bruno, Calif.

Henry Hayden, No. 571
1904 Juniata Road,
Norristown, Penna.

Lots of Water in Australia

Notes from Sid Baker of Paddington, N. S. W., Australia

Recently there have been very disastrous floods in the New South Wales district of Australia. "Many towns were washed away and the death roll was enormous. Yet strange as it may seem, in spite of the abnormal rains here in Sydney, Wirth's circus has done better business this season than for the past 12 years. Wirth's are in Sydney now (March 29) for a 6 weeks season and the rain has pelted down incessantly ever since they came 2 weeks ago. Yet despite all this, the business has been phenomenal. We can't work it out, can we?

"An incident worth quoting perhaps is that in the town of Dubbo where the floods were extra bad it was reported in a Sydney newspaper that a dead elephant was seen in a tree top just outside the town. The report said that nobody seemed to know how the elephant got there. So I did a bit of snooping and found out that Perry Bros. Circus was in the town of Dubbo a few weeks prior to the floods and while there Perrys oldest elephant, Topsy, died late one night. The circus having to get away very early the next morning, some men were sent to bury Topsy on the river bank. The men having very little time to spare did not dig a very deep hole so when the flood waters rushed through the town they must have shifted the loose earth around topsy and carried her along until she was caught in a tree. All this sounds fantastic, but I can assure you the story is quite true. I do not know what finally became of Topsy."

"Cap" Curtis Dies

W. H. "Cap" Curtis, circus general superintendent and boss canvassman died in Cuevas, Miss., on April 2. He was 82 years old and had been in show business since 1890. Services were conducted at Gulfport on Monday, the 5th. Only known survivors are a niece and a nephew.

"Cap" Curtis gained fame in the circus business for being the first person to move circus wagons with a motor vehicle and in 1910 he first built the Curtis patent seat wagon. These were in general use for about 15 years. During the time that he was with the Hagenbeck Wallace show he perfected and put into use the Curtis spool wagons for rolling the big top.

The last circus he was with was Cole Bros. in 1950 but he trouped as a lot superintendent with Royal American Shows in 1952. His last work with the Big Top was as boss canvassman when a Pennsylvania city borrowed a Ringling tent to house a Birthday Party for President Eisenhower in September, 1953.

Howe's Great London Circus of 1916

Notes from a press Sheet, Bob Taber

It was on October 10, 1916, Howe's Great London Circus, full of honors and a wonderful triumph after its long conquering tour of the continent was announced for Rolla, Missouri.

The advance notices said, "It will be presented on a scale of colossal magnitude and lavish expenditure never known before in this country. The traveling amusement sensation of the day, bringing mirth and joy. They promised 20 clowns, 50 leapers, 100 acrobats, 250 horses, 400 people, Dublin Grays, Black Hussars, Marvelous Eddy's, monarchs supreme of the amusement realm,, Royal Yeddo Jananese troupe and 200 other great acts. A double menagerie contained animals from every country, three bands of music, a Royal hippodrome. Many times the biggest and most bewildering production ever in America, the most stupendously stirring spectacle that the human eyes ever witnessed.

The grand street parade was announced for 10 A.M.

Wheeler Bros. in 1916

Notes from a press Sheet, Bob Taber

All new, first time here, the world's best circus, Wheeler Bros. enormous shows, a three ring circus, July 3, 1916, New Ulm, Minn., the display advertisements read. The show advertised a vast menagerie, hippodrome and blue ribbon horse fair; the real circus beautiful; 500 selected highest paid artists; seven sensational special displays; \$100,000 made in Paris costumes; see the terrific aerial battle, aristocratic fox hunt, exciting polo games, world at war, wonderful Pekin guards, great military displays, massive Biblical spectacle, David and Goliath. A new era in circus history; splendor on splendor. Its grandeur, beauty, originality and vast costliness has amazed the world. There is no other like it on earth. See the mighty new style pageant at 10:30 A.M., followed by the opening of the Blue Ribbon Horse Fair.

C. H. S. Member Dies

Word has just been received by the Secretary of the Circus Historical Society of the death of G. Fred Orphal of Ozone Park, New York. Mr. Orphal had been a member of the Circus Historical Society since 1944 and his number was 162. He was past 80 years old.

Many Circuses 46 Years Ago

By Charlie Duble, Associate Editor of Bandwagon

A few years ago I read a short article wherein the writer began by saying "The Circus Business Today Is a Mere Shadow Of Its Former Self." His reference was of course to the number of shows years ago, and those of today. He named only the larger shows.

I am naming here the circuses and wild west shows of 46 years ago, (season 1909). The titles of many are well remembered by the majority of fans I am sure, while many other titles have never been heard of by the younger circus fans.

The railroad shows enroute the season of 1909 were: Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show On Earth; Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows; Sells-Floto Circus; John Robinson 10 Big Shows; Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows; Norris & Rowe Circus; Al. G. Barnes Trained Animal Show; Frank A. Robbins Show; Campbell Bros. Great Consolidated Shows; Gollmar Bros. Circus; Cole Bros. World-Toured Shows (Martin Downs, owner); Mighty Haag Shows; John H. Sparks World-Famous Shows; Sun Bros. World's Progressive Shows; Welsh Bros. Shows; Howes Great London Show; Yankee Robinson Show; Dode Fisk Great Combined Shows; Hargraves Circus; Leon Washburn Show; Mackay's European Shows; Howard Damon Show; Gentry Bros. No. 1; Gentry Bros. Show No. 2; Wiedemann Bros. Show, 2 cars; Colorado Grant Show, 2 cars; Rogers & Clark Show, 2 cars; Mollie Bailey Show, 2 cars. The two large wild west shows on rail were Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and the 101 Ranch Wild West.

Motorized circuses had not yet appeared and it was some years later before they did come, with the coming of better roads. The overland wagon shows of 1909 were Hunt's Silver Plate Show; Al. F. Wheeler Model Plate Show; LaMont Bros. Show; Lucky Bill Show; Lorenzo & Maurer Show; London & Warren Show; Chas. Bartine Show; Woodford & Elzor Show; Rippel Bros. Show; Adam Fetzer Show; Orton Bros. Show; George S. Ely Show; James Shelby Southern Show, and the Rose Killian Show.

The following, all small outfits, were appearing at parks and fairs the season of 1909. Dickey's Circle D Ranch; Kennedy's X.I.T. Ranch; Texas Bud's Wild West; Diamond Bar Ranch Wild West; Lone Star May's Wild West; Ben Holmes Wild West, and Snyder Bros. Wild West.

Should any other shows of 1909 be omitted in my list I suggest the names be sent to The Bandwagon for future records.

INFORMATION WANTED

Anyone knowing the date of the death of John Carrol, former Equestrian Director on the Floto Shows years ago, write to John J. O'Brien, 6017 Raymond Way, Sacramento 20, Calif.

Clyde Beatty Circus Season Route of Year 1954

Courtesy F. C. Fisher

March

- 20—Tucson, Ariz.
- 21—Tucson, Ariz. (Mat.)
- 22—El Centro, Calif.
- 23—Calexico, Calif.
- 24—Indio, Calif.
- 25—Pomona, Calif.
- 26—Victorville, Calif. (Mat.)
- 27 & 28—Las Vegas, Nev.
- 29—Barsto, Calif.
- 30—Hemet, Calif.
- 31—Whittier, Calif.

April

- 1—Redondo Beach, Calif.
- 2—San Pedro, Calif.
- 3—Long Beach, Calif.
- 4—Long Beach, Calif.
- 5—Torrance, Calif.
- 6 & 7—Westchester, Calif.
- 8 to 18—Los Angeles, Calif.
- 19—Compton, Calif.
- 20—Anaheim, Calif.
- 21—Oceanside, Calif.
- 22—Escondido, Calif.
- 23—San Diego, Calif.
- 24—San Diego, Calif.
- 25—San Diego, Calif.
- 26—Santa Ana, Calif.
- 27—Riverside, Calif.
- 28—San Bernardino, Calif.
- 29—El Monte, Calif.
- 30—Fontana, Calif.

May

- 1—West Los Angeles, Calif.
- 2—West Los Angeles, Calif.
- 3—Lancaster, Calif.
- 4—Bakersfield, Calif.
- 5—Fresno, Calif.
- 6—Madera, Calif.
- 7—Modesto, Calif.
- 8—Redwood City, Calif.
- 9—San Mateo, Calif.
- 10—San Leandro, Calif.
- 11—San Rafael, Calif.
- 12—Ukiah, Calif.
- 13—Scotia, Calif. (Nite)
- 14—Eureka, Calif.
- 15—Eureka, Calif. (Mat.)
- 16—Willits, Calif. (Mat.)
- 17—Vallejo, Calif.
- 18—Napa, Calif.
- 19—Oroville, Calif.
- 20—Redding, Calif.
- 21—Klamath Falls, Ore. (Nite)

- 22—Klamath Falls, Ore.
- 23—Montague, Calif.
- 24—Medford, Ore.
- 25—Grants Pass, Ore.
- 26—Roseburg, Ore.
- 27—Eugene, Ore.
- 28—Ben, Ore. (Nite)
- 29—Ben, Ore. (Mat.)
- 30—Hermiston, Ore. (Mat.)
- 31—Boise, Ida.

June

- 1—Shoshone, Ida.
- 2—Twin Falls, Ida.
- 3—Pocatello, Ida.
- 4—Idaho Falls, Ida.
- 5—Dillon, Mont.
- 6—Butte, Mont.
- 7—Bozeman, Mont.
- 8—Helena, Mont.
- 9—Missoula, Mont.
- 10—Wallace, Ida.
- 11—Spokane, Wash.
- 12—Spokane, Wash.
- 13—Moscow, Ida.
- 14—Lewiston, Ida.
- 15—Walla Walla, Wash.
- 16—Yakima, Wash.
- 17—Pendleton, Ore.
- 18—The Dalles, Ore.
- 19—Hills, Ore.
- 20—Tillamook, Ore. (Sun.)
- 21—McMinnville, Ore.
- 22—Corvallis, Ore.
- 23—Salem, Ore.
- 24—Oregon City, Ore.
- 25—Portland, Ore.
- 26—Portland, Ore.
- 27—Portland, Ore. (Sun.)
- 28—Astoria, Ore.
- 29—Vancouver, Wash.
- 30—Longview, Wash.

July

- 1—Tacoma, Wash.
- 2—Seattle, Wash.
- 3—Seattle, Wash.
- 4—Seattle, Wash. (Sun.)
- 5—Everett, Wash.
- 6—Burlington, Wash.
- 7—Bellingham, Wash.
- 8—Vancouver, B. C.
- 9—Vancouver, B. C.
- 10—Vancouver, B. C.
- 12—Port Alberni, B. C.
- 13—Courtenay, B. C.
- 14—Victoria, B. C.

- 15—Victoria, B. C.
- 16—Duncan, B. C.
- 17—Nanaimo, B. C.
- 18—Enroute (Sun.)
- 19—New Westminster, B. C.
- 20—Chilliwac, B. C.
- 21—Kamloops, B. C.
- 22—Vernon, B. C.
- 23—Kelowna, B. C.
- 24—Revelstoke, B. C.
- 25—Enroute (Sun.)
- 26—Edmonton, Alta.
- 27—Edmonton, Alta.
- 28—Edmonton, Alta.
- 29—Lacombe, Alta.
- 30—Calgary, Alta.
- 31—Calgary, Alta.

August

- 1—Enroute (Sun.)
- 2—MacLeod, Alta.
- 3—Medicine Hat, Alta.
- 4—Swift Current, Sask.
- 5—Moose Jaw, Sask.
- 6—Weyburn, Sask.
- 7—Estevan, Sask.
- 9—Minot, N. D.
- 10—Williston, N. D.
- 11—Wolf Point, Mont.
- 12—Glendive, Mont.
- 13—Dickinson, N. D.
- 14—Bismarck, N. D.
- 15—Linton (Sun. Mat.) N. D.
- 16—Aberdeen, S. D.
- 17—Watertown, S. D.
- 18—Huron, S. D.
- 19—Mitchell, S. D.
- 20—Yankton, S. D.
- 21—Sioux City, Iowa
- 22—Enroute
- 23—Redfield, S. D.
- 24—Gettysburg, S. D.
- 25—Pierre, S. D.
- 26—Rapid City (Nite) S. D.
- 27—Rapid City, S. D.
- 28—Crawford, Nebr.
- 29—Alliance, Nebr.
- 30—Scotts Bluff, Nebr.
- 31—Wheatland, Wyo.

September

- 1—Cheyenne, Wyo.
- 2—Greeley, Colo.
- 3—Denver, Colo.
- 4—Denver, Colo.
- 5—Denver, Colo.
- 6—Pueblo, Colo.
- 7—Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 8—Longmont, Colo.
- 9—Ft. Collins, Colo.
- 10—Ft. Morgan, Colo.
- 11—Sterling, Colo.
- 12—Sidney (Sun.) Nebr.
- 13—North Platte, Nebr.
- 14—Kearney, Nebr.
- 15—Grand Island, Nebr.
- 16—Columbus, Nebr.
- 17—Norfolk, Nebr.
- 18—Fremont, Nebr.
- 19—Lincoln (Sun.), Nebr.
- 20—York, Nebr.
- 21—Hastings, Nebr.
- 22—Holdrege, Nebr.
- 23—McCook, Nebr.
- 24—Superior, Nebr.
- 25—Concordia, Kans.
- 26—Enroute (Sun.)
- 27—Ponca City, Okla.
- 28—Enid, Okla.
- 29—Duncan, Okla.
- 30—Lawton, Okla.

October

- 1—Altus, Okla.
- 2—Frederick, Okla.
- 3—Wichita Falls (Sun.) Tex.
- 4—Amarillo, Tex.
- 5—Amarillo, Tex.
- 6—Lubbock, Tex.
- 7—Sweetwater, Tex.
- 8—Big Springs, Tex.
- 7—Midland, Tex.
- 10—Odessa, Tex.
- 11—Pecos, Tex.
- (End of Season)

READ THESE

March issue of True Magazine article on the life of P. T. Barnum.

April issue of Saga magazine, an article on Circus Man, the fabulous John Ringling North.

Sunday News and Sunday Mirror, March 27, color pictures of The Big Show opening in New York.

Also the Sunday New York paper featured pictures of the big show.

If any of you have any information about Shader Johnson or Slivers Oakley, former clowns, it will be appreciated if you write to Willard T. Northrop, Shinhopple, New York.

"Elephant Escape"

Sent in by F. Fisher, Peru, Indiana

Judy, a six thousand pound elephant, one of five recently purchased from the St. Louis Zoo by Paul Kelley caused quite a bit of excitement recently. Kelley, is now the owner of the former Cole Bros. winter quarters located seven miles south of Peru, on Highway 31. Judy broke away from Kelley while being exercised on Sunday night, April 17 (1955) at 7 P.M. The whole of Sunday night local and state police and the Sheriff's Department armed with rifles hunted 'till after midnight for the big beast, but she was not sighted. At midnight the search was called off and Kelley decided she might settle down somewhere 'till morning.

This, she evidently did, and a Mrs. Eisman called the Jail early in the morning to say there was an elephant in her pasture, which is located near Bunker Hill, but by the time the Sheriff and his men and Paul Kelley arrived on the farm Judy had traveled on another three miles. Kelley, armed with twenty loaves of bread, and his men finally "talked" their way close to the beast and managed to get chains on her ankles and around a tree. Five hours later Kelley hauled her back to the Bull Barn on his farm in one of his Bull trucks. The only damage reported done during her escapade was to farmers' fences.

The only real excitement during the early part of the hunt came when Judy charged Von Binkered, a former Cheerful Gardner elephant man. When she charged Von climbed into a nearby tree and was shaken from there by Judy. When he was dislodged from the tree he fell into Pipe Creek, a stream which flows through the Winter Quarter property.

Judy's value was placed at \$5,000 by Paul Kelley, her owner.

THE CLOUTMANS VISIT OHIO AND INDIANA

John Cloutman, C. H. S. member, his wife and youngest daughter, Gail, visited C. H. S. members while playing "School" shows throughout the Midwest. They visited with the Kings in Richmond, Indiana, on March 17th. They have quite a menagerie of small animals including snakes, birds, monkeys, etc. We enjoyed having them for dinner, and were delighted to have made some new friends. John, as you know, is Publicity Director for Hunt Bros. Circus. He formerly was a newspaper man. Their home is in Dover, New Hampshire.

FORMER C. H. S. MEMBER DIES

Fred Murphy, 67, died on February 26th at his home in Iron River, Michigan. He had been in ill health for several months. He was the Iron River city attorney and a practicing lawyer. In his youth he had managed the Menominee Opera House in Menominee, Michigan. He is survived by his widow and three children. Burial was in Menominee.

NEW SERVICE**Circusiana Mart To Start With April 9 Issue**

CHICAGO, March 12.—A new advertising service designed especially for readers of the Circus Department will be launched by The Billboard in the Spring Special Issue, April 9.

The service will provide for classified advertising of a restricted type to be published right in the circus section. Tabbed the Circusiana Mart, it will aid those readers who wish to buy or sell circus photographs, programs, routes and lithographs; locate or offer sunburst wheels, Merry-Go-Round horses, or other antique show equipment; exchange circus books, calliope recordings, photo dealers' lists and materials for miniature circuses; or seek factual information or show history.

Fills Demand

Inauguration of the new service results from the fact that The Billboard often is asked by active and retired circus people, as well as other readers, how they might obtain or dispose of such material or collectors' items. Whether they are attempting to make extra money through sale of circus material or trying to establish a date for documentary purposes through use of old circus routes, the new service is expected to be of value to many.

The first Circusiana Mart will appear in the April 9 special issue and others are scheduled periodically after that. Not acceptable in this classified column will be the want ads of shows, acts and promotion men such as now appear in the regular advertising columns.

Rates available from The Billboard, 2160 Patterson St., Cincinnati 22, Ohio.

—Reprinted from The Billboard issue of March 12, 1955

First 1955 Beatty Photos

**12 PHOTOS, ONE LITHOGRAPH, DISPLAY ADVERTISING;
PRESS STORY—\$2.50**

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MENT, PRESS STORY**

AL G. BARNES WINDOW CARDS—1/2 Sheet Size

Few Items to Trade

BOB TABER

3668 COMER AVE., RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Creamer Writes On Old and New Circuses

Reprinted from The Jefferson (Ohio) Gazette, Tuesday, April 12th, 1955

Editor's Note: The following account of the early circus was given by Mr. John E. Creamer, Ashtabula, veteran County Fair Board member and circus fan, at a meeting of the Men's group of the Congregational Church at Ashtabula Harbor.

Mr. Creamer, treasurer of the county fair board, is chairman and "Ringmaster" of the Mills Bros. Circus press banquet here next Saturday.

PROLOGUE

"Give me the Circus."

Give me the circus to make me young again.

Give me the circus and the laughter of children and the whole parade of wonders to make me realize life is good to live and worth living, too.

Give me the circus—Lord, how we need it as never before.

Give me a few hours away from all the wear and tear of a world torn by jealousy and dissension. More circuses, more kind words and fewer weapons.

Life is good to live where there is a circus in town.

* * * *

Earliest record of circus—329 B.C. the Circus Maximus in Rome. Circus Maximus historians claim it had seats for 250,000 people, was three stories tall, 1875 feet long and six hundred and seventy-five feet wide, with a great ring in the half ellipse. Pompey, seeking to woo the populace from Crassus and Julius Caesar, staged what must have been the greatest show of all time. It ran five days, opening with a parade featuring tableaux on decorated wagons drawn by horses and elephants. There were countless contests involving boxers, wrestlers and gladiators. Elephants and lions fought and died, condemned criminals were sent to their deaths in the lion cages. Chariot races and Roman Standing thrilled the multitudes. Rome and the Circus Maximus faded but the circus progressed westward to England. In 1770 English shows featured riding or equitation acts. Astleys and Franconis were the leading shows and their descendants eventually landed in America and Rickets was the first American circus, a riding school in Philadelphia. George Washington was a frequent attendant and a great admirer of John Bill Rickets equestrianism. In 1815 the first elephant was brought to America. It was purchased by Hakaliah Bailey for \$1,000 and was exhibited in livery barns, public squares and market places. Additional animals were added and this with the addition of Phinea T. Barnum became the forerunner of the Barnum and Bailey Show. Hakaliah Bailey is not to be confused with James A. Bailey, who was the later partner of Barnum. Following this, numerous shows were organized and played thru the countryside with horse-drawn vans over muddy roads.

During the Civil War the Barnum Circus and the Dan Rice Circus flourished, playing both sides of the Yank and Reb camping grounds.

The Dan Rice Show was out of Girard, Pa., and Dan Rice was the original singing clown. Dan Rice prospered and the late sixties he had erected a monument to the Soldiers and Sailors who fell in the Civil War. This monument still stands in the middle of Route 20 at Girard and it will pay the weary traveler to pause and read the inscription on this 90 year old memorial.

In 1870 the Dan Rice Circus unloaded from a river boat at McGregor, Iowa, and five openmouthed boys who witnessed the unloading vowed that they sometime would own a circus. These boys were named Rungling, sons of a hornessmaker who afterwards moved to Baraboo, Wis. They first launched a musical concert show which toured neighboring towns. In 1884, Al, Otto, Alf. T., Charles and John, with the name now changed to Ringling, put out their first wagon show. Successful, they bought other shows to form the mighty Ringling Bros. which is still touring under the name of Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Combined.

Shows contemporary in the heyday of the circus were the Sells Bros., later Forepaw and Sells, Adam Forepaugh Show, John Robinson Ten Big Shows, Walter L. Main Fashion Plate Shows, Ben Wallace Shows, later the Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows, Dode Fish Shows, Sun Bros., Welch Bros., Sig Santello Shows and numerous others, including Harris Nickel Plate Shows, an outstanding 25-cent admission circus.

Dog and Pony shows were popular and Gentry Bros. and Sipe and Blake both had good shows and good business. Miniature cages and wagons with six and eight ponies driven by local boys gave daily street parades. Many a leading citizen today got his greatest thrill by driving a team and receiving a pass. Wild West Shows also had their followings. Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, Young Buffalo, Buckskin Ben, Wyoming Bill and later the Tom Mix Wild West, all attracted good business but today there are no Wild West shows other than on TV. Railroad shows are a thing of the past, there being but two left—Ringling Circus with 95 double length cars, and the Clyde Beatty Circus with approximately 15 cars.

Today there are about 15 truck circuses, the largest being Mills Bros. and King Bros., both promotional circuses appearing under local auspices. Following the Civil War in the 70's and 80's numerous small circuses were organized in Windsor and Orwell and at that time that vicinity was the center of American Shows. These shows were the outgrowth of the success of one man's venture with a trained horse. Elwood Hamilton lived on a 400-acre farm. He trained a colt, which he named "Sir Henry" and with which he toured the surrounding country giving exhibitions of the animal's intelligence. That was the starter of Hamilton's fortune and was the foundation of the county's shows. Tourists today driving west on Rt. 322 from Orwell will see a statue to the memory of "Sir Henry," a replica of the colt in marble or stone. Hamilton was interested in several of the shows along with his brother Sene. In 1873 Hamilton sold all his circus property, horses and animals. In 1875 Hamilton again organized a show in partnership with M. M. Hilliard of Orwell and Robert Huntington, a world famed clown. This show was known as Hilliard-Hamilton-Huntington's Great Pacific Circus. Later Hamilton sold to Hilliard.

In the spring of 1877 Hamilton started the first regular circus.

All the county shows up to this time had featured Indians and no barebackers. Hamilton engaged equestrians and took as a partner Wilson Sargent of Trumbull and named the show Hamilton's New York Circus. An Ashtabula Band toured with the circus. The show continued a few years and then was sold. M. M. Hilliard was raised in Orwell and made a fortune in the California gold rush. In 1879 Hilliard opened the circus with animals for the first time. One hundred horses, one elephant, two camels and six cages of wild animals. In 1883 Wm. Main, who had operated a 40-horse show, combined with the 100-horse Hilliard Show and opened in Orwell in April of that year. It had two massive band wagons, many tableau wagons, ten cages and one large elephant. This outfit was on tour two years and was sold at auction in Georgia in the fall of 1885. Newton Brothers of Huntsburg was a successful show for several years.

Israel Cohen, a merchant of Orwell, was seized with show fever and organized and operated a show one season, after which he went back to his pots and pans. Frank Griswold of Windsor was another successful showman and accumulated a fortune.

William Main and his son, Walter L., were successful with their wagon shows and eventually graduated to Railroad cars, at one time traveling on 30 cars and making the first trip to the Pacific coast. On that trip the feature attraction was a horseless carriage, The Duryea, the first automobile seen on the west coast. The Main Shows had winter quarters in Geneva for 40 years and the biggest holiday was the last Saturday in April—Opening Day. The Main Circus survived two total fire losses and one train wreck at Tyrone, Pa. The Main interests put out many shows from Geneva under various names, among them Walter L. Main, R. R. Shows, Walter L. Main Fashion Plate Shows, Rhode Royal Shows, Col. Fred Cummins Wild West, and Fighting the Flames, Rentz Bros., and other smaller shows. In 1910, Tom Mix was Chief of the Cowboys in the Wild West section of the Main Circus. In 1931 the Walter L. Main Circus, owned by Bill Newton, closed in Orwell, O., and moved to the Ashtabula County Fair Grounds. This was a 30-truck circus and during the winter it was rebuilt and opened the season under ownership of Bill Newton and Jimmy Heron. It finished the season and then disbanded. Walter L. Main continued to reside in Geneva until his death in 1950 at the age of 87.

In the past few years indoor circuses have become very popular and touring shows find it more difficult to prosper. The first indoor circus was held in Smith's Opera House in Ashtabula in 1893. The Main Circus was billed to play Ashtabula and on arrival the lot was under two feet of water. The late Jimmy Smith suggested to Mr. Main that his Opera House be used and an afternoon and evening show was put on to two packed houses. Acrobats, jugglers, trained ponies and educated horses as well as a trained bear put on a good performance. Since 1940 Mills Bros., three boys out of Cleveland, have put out a circus appearing under auspices only. A nucleus of five trucks purchased from Richard Bros. in Talulah, La., has grown to a fine 3-ring circus transported on 70 trucks and a tent with a seating capacity of 5,000 people. The show has covered every state in the eastern half of the U.S., and a good many western states. Known as a Sunday School Show, it never operates on Sunday, tolerates no gambling and is a credit to the organization sponsoring same.

On Oct. 3, 1954, Mills Brothers moved into the Jefferson Fair Grounds from Johnstown, Pa., and established winter quarters. About 35 people required to care for horses, animals and elephants have been in quarters and as of April 1, 100 people are employed, and by opening date over 300 performers and working crew will comprise the personnel. Six elephants including Burma, the Official Emblem of the Republican Party, horses and other animals have consumed 6,000 tons of hay purchased from county farmers. Mills Bros. each year have a Press Party for newspaper people and circus fans given on the opening day between performances. Circus owners, civic leaders, and friends look forward to the annual event. This year the party will be held in Jefferson High School and will be served by the Band Boosters Committee. Guests expected include Rep. Oliver Bolton, Lt. Gov. John Brown and other officials.

The Mills Bros. Circus Opening Date, April 16, is being sponsored by the Ashtabula County Fair Board and thru the help of firms, industry and individuals all under-privileged children will be guests at the show.

Three rings filled at all times provide two hours of color and excitement. Performers from every land are featured and over twenty different nationalities are represented. Thru the winter, many of the Mills Bros. Circus acts have been featured on TV's Super Circus and the Big Top. Rehearsals are being held daily and all are welcome at any time. As many as 300 children from one school have been in attendance and with good weather thousands will witness the preparing of the big show for the 1955 season.

Good luck to the Mills Brothers and may you have dry lots, sunny skies and a successful season.

GOOD NEWS!

Harry Simpson, former Editor of the Bandwagon, is now at home and making rapid strides towards complete recovery. He is still not going to be able to "put it up and take it down" on any muddy lots, but that won't be far off, either. The Kings visited him and Van in Camden on April 9th, and we really were amazed at his appearance, and we immediately named him "Fatso."

Will Buy

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Our Vice President Bill Green

Reprinted from Omaha World-Herald, Sunday, March 13, 1955

Washington, Kans.—Bill Green, 45, may yet see his childhood ambition partially realized.

A physical handicap deprived him of a career in the entertainment world.

But before long his voice may be heard on the midways of carnivals and side shows touring the country.

Bill is recording talks on tape which relate the history of freaks and other sideshow attractions. For 20 years he has been collecting pictures, books and other material on circuses and sideshows.

He plans to make slides to illustrate his recorded talks and send the stories and slides into homes and clubs with package entertainment about animals and entertainers.

He also is experimenting in recordings for midway spiels. Carnival canned music and ballyhoo is in growing demand.

When he was a child he imitated show people and dreamed of being a magician. By the time he was in his teens he realized his physical handicap would prevent his becoming adept in the show business.

His boyhood shouting and ballyhooing for an imaginary crowd in front of a play tent kept the Green premises in a wild state—but he developed a strong, clear voice.

He gave amateur magician performances before school and lodge groups and lost all self-consciousness about his physique. Before the ban, he was caller at the weekly town bingo games.

In 1934 he started collecting circus material. He subscribed to a swappers' magazine and his mother took him to every circus within driving distance of Washington to take pictures, meet old friends and view performances.

Five years ago he got his own specially equipped car. He's seen nearly every circus, big or small, in operation in the country. He is a charter member of the Circus Historical Society and an honorary member of the Circus Clown Club of America.

Bill has a picture of himself in a cage of lions with the trainer, Capt. Eddy Kuhn. No one would enter the cage with the two men to take the picture and finally a canvasman shot one through the bars.

One of his prized collections is a recording made for him by Tommy Comstock, calliope player, at Anchorage, with the first circus to show in Alaska.

His photo of Isla Miller, wife of D. Miller, on the back of an elephant is used on letterheads and in advertising of the Al G. Kelley and Miller Brothers Circus.

For 15 years he published a small circus fans publication, "The Call of the Calliope." He gave it up last year because the strain of operating his one-man business and helping his folks was too heavy. His father is 96, his mother in the eighties.

His collection is now under one roof in his den in the backyard. Circus fan collectors from near and far keep a path beaten to the door.

The Circus

Sent in by George Lanphear

Editorial in the WESTERLY (R.I.) SUN 8/16/54

TWO LADIES on a bus were talking about circuses. One of them maintained that all circuses were phony, cheap and vulgar. It may be suspected that the lady never saw a circus, or if she did, she did not look at it very closely.

A circus is compounded of moondust and magic, of small boys dreams and old ones memories. It is always the same, although they change the acts and the performers somewhat from one season to another. Yet it is always strangely new and fascinating as if the emotions it arouses in the human heart can be discovered anew each time the big top is raised and the ring master takes his place.

Trying to describe a circus, like trying to hold quicksilver in the palm of the hand, is impossible. How do you describe the sight of the big top going up in the morning before the city is awake, with the sky a dull gray, sweating roustabouts straining to their task? How do you describe the smells, the sounds of the circus with the calliopes and the barkers calling out their extravagant boasts about what you will see inside. Can you put a clown down on paper, with his painted face and his art of comedy that was already old in the days when the Emperors ruled in Rome. Are there words to tell of the tightness in the throat when an acrobat flies through the air, his spangled costume catching every light and every eye, and grasps the swinging trapeze. Even if there are words, who would be able to describe the face of a child as he looks at it all for the first time? Or the face of an adult as he looks at a child and remembers when he saw his first circus.

A circus is phoney? If it is so is laughter and imagination and beauty.

